



Macleay River Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

August 2013

Number 4

President's Report

At our June General Meeting we were able to fill the Secretary/Public Officer position. A long time member, Mrs Ruth Woodward, was elected. Thanks Ruth for your continued work with our Society.

Billie Crawford and I attended the launch of the Kinchela Boys Home exhibition "no names, just numbers" on 4 May in the Dunghutti-Naku Aboriginal Art Gallery. Our Society provided photographs and research for the exhibition.

Representatives from Museums and Galleries NSW are coming up in September to inspect us and see if they can assist in any way. This is part of their Outreach Programme.

Port Macquarie Historical Society is putting in for a Regional Museums Networking Grant to arrange a travelling exhibition on the theme of Waterways. At least five regional museums have to be involved and our Society has committed to participation in this project if the Grant Application is successful.

Phil Lee
President

Research Report

Michael Scott printed Vera Jobson's obituary for Alex. Michael and Ruth also did Cavanagh research.

Fred enquired about a gravesite he had seen at Arakoon, near the entrance to Gap Beach some years ago of a young surveyor from the 1870's. He couldn't remember the name of the person but wondered if it was still there. Ken Brown was checking this one out from cemetery records, also by looking for articles about surveyors of that period. I don't think he identified who the surveyor was.

Jodie, a teacher at Kempsey TAFE for twenty years, is

researching the history of technical education in the Macleay Valley. She would like photos, interviews, records – including the establishment date of the College for an exhibition at the College in September. Garry Munday is working on this one, but any information that others could contribute would be greatly appreciated. Yvonne and Doug Small have provided Garry with newspaper articles relating to Doug's involvement as a teacher for the Building and Construction courses. Yvonne was also instrumental in forming a movement for the purpose of establishing technical classes in Kempsey for dressmaking, millinery and cooking.

Moya (nee Brogan) has written again (first time was in 1997 to Billie Crawford). She is still trying to ascertain the year when Owan Brogan took over their property at Kinchela/Longreach. Peter Ryan was able to give her a little more information from Lorraine Stacker's thesis but still could not pinpoint the exact year.

Beulah enquired about the 1887 flood in which Mary Cassin drowned. She has been corresponding with Garry Munday who is researching Michael and Mary Cassin for her. Michael sold their farm at Belgrave very

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soon after she died. Both are buried at West Kempsey cemetery. Research for this is ongoing.

Garry met with Ian Chapman at the Museum on 27 June re Chapman research. He was particularly interested in some of the racehorses F Chapman raced.

Garry, Tom and Judy are making progress on a sporting theme for the 2014 calendar.

Desley and I have been trying to find evidence if John Albert Felton rode the program at Warwick Farm or Gladstone. He was apparently a jockey in the early to mid 1930's. We are having problems isolating John Felton from other Feltons mentioned in racing circles. There seems to have been several jockeys/trainers from the Felton family at any one time. This research is ongoing.

I had a request for the grave details of Bridget Rafferty and adjacent Rafferty graves at Frederickton Cemetery for Brian.

The owners of the Powerhouse Motel have requested information on the Lantern Inn and the Powerhouse Motel (previously named the Macleay Valley Motor Inn). Tracy believes the restaurant was built before the Motel. Tracy has had many diners to the restaurant reminiscing about previous visits to the Lantern Inn; she believes that it opened late 60's, early 70's. It now appears it was built in the early 1960s. Mr Alan Richardson purchased it about 1972. We will follow up with him, as he still lives in the area, to see if he can provide more information on the gaps in the timeline.

We have an Argus article dated October 1981 mentioning that a flash bush fire in November 1980 threatened the Lantern Inn restaurant. By this time it had motel rooms added and was known as the Macleay Valley Motor Inn. Any other information would be greatly appreciated.

Jenny Colling from Kempsey Shire Council wanted photos or information on any Jewish people buried in the Shire. She was approached by Jewish representatives in Sydney regarding the consecration of the Jewish section of Frederickton Cemetery on 2 July Phil was able to provide her with some photos of Jewish people on the Macleay.

Garry also contacted Naomi at Land Dynamics

regarding the street naming of the Coast Estate in South West Rocks (formerly Saltwater). These streets are named after vessels for which Garry is providing historical information.

Peter is also researching the Edwards/Lewis/Wallis family for Cheryl.

Ken provided information on the Marriott/Martin families for Trish Essex. Desley posted off all the information he collated as he held it pending receipt of the research fee. He also researched Michael Thomas and Margaret Deasy for Vicki's in-laws. Now she is seeking information on Phyllis Henchcliffe.

There is a research request for information on John Chapman of Euroka, which Ken initiated. He has passed it on to Desley for completion. It is difficult to finish off a research on our allocated days here, so this saves the delay in getting the information to the enquirer.

Sue also catalogued files, in particular the Showground file and Showground Society and is cataloguing the library books.

Desley is cataloguing the many Rudder files and typing them into the Database.

Peggy Gould
Research Section

Photography Report

Judy Waters is currently away following long-awaited surgery on her hand. We wish her all the best in her recovery.

Judy gave her final talk on the Angus McNeill collection to the Day View Club on 21 June. Most of those present were amazed at just how important the collection is to the Museum and to Kempsey. They appreciate what we are doing with Angus' collection.

The exhibition in the photography gallery area is about to be changed, we apologise for any disruption in the meantime.

Russell McKenzie has kindly gone into production for us, turning out more much needed boxes for our glass negative storage. Thank you Russell, much appreciated.

The Private Hand memorial dedication ceremony at

Frederickton recently led to a lot of interest in Hand family photographs. Private Ernest Hand was the adopted son of Harry and Agnes Hand. He served in World War 1 in France, was gassed and suffered for a long time after from related health problems. He was finally tracked down by descendant Geoff Cuckson from Victoria, to an unmarked grave in Frederickton Cemetery. The Office of Australian War Graves assisted with a headstone which was dedicated by family members on Saturday 29 June 2013.

Bob from Newcastle dropped in with some 1920's photographs of Kempsey Light and Power Company's Power Station which stood next to the southern approach to the Railway Bridge. Bob's father worked for Kempsey Light and Power around this time before moving on to the Nestle factory. Bob kindly agreed to loan the photographs for scanning and these images are now in our collection.

We have been asked to support a community project The Many Faces of the Macleay – an exhibition of photographic portraits combined with historic images and landscapes across the Macleay Valley and publicly projected in the evening in several locations in September/October 2013.

We have also been asked by the Macleay Argus to provide around 40 photographs for The Way We Were, a supplement they are bringing out early next year. This was approved at our most recent meeting.

Enid and Bill from Port Macquarie called in, and Enid was able to identify quite a number of recently scanned photographs of the Secomb/Secombe family around Kempsey.

Kempsey Council asked us for any photographs covering Jewish settlers on the Macleay in association with the recent dedication of portion of Frederickton Cemetery. Only three photographs could be found.

Judy Waters and Phil Lee
Photography Section

Museum Report

Russell has drawn up and costed a plan to make the sawmill display more secure, I am awaiting a suitable grant opportunity to put in for.

The Gill Farm model has been cleaned and the case painted, and the wheelchair obscuring the display has

been relocated. The model is of the area south of the current railway bridge and depicts former landmarks such as Dangar and Watts sawmill and the shingle bed in the Macleay River.

Some dolls have been added to the toy display to correct the former male bias.

Verto Employment have assisted us in finding a cleaner, who started in July. Jan will do three hours twice weekly on Tuesday and Fridays on general cleaning. It is hoped with further training to involve her on maintenance on some of the museum artefacts.

Gordon, son of Bill Pople who installed our Southern Cross windmill, came to check it out. It has suffered from a lack of maintenance (oiling bearings etc) and will now barely turn. Russell and I are trying to locate a windmill mechanic, very rare on the coast as solar pumps are now all the go. The windmill originally started work in the late 1940's near Glenrock, and then was relocated to the Kemp property at Kinchela. It was purchased by the late Miss Gwen Kemp and donated to our Society in 1988. It was installed in its present location by Bill Pople, who also carried out the first two installations.

The ribbon and certificate for our quilt "Betty's Dream" have now been added to that display. Thanks to Ruth for pointing out this omission.

Russell is currently working on enclosing the Oaklands farm model to prevent dust and moisture from getting in.

I had a meeting on Friday with Lee, an ex-teacher who is interested in running an education programme for us. This will involve contacting local secondary schools re visits to the Museum, organising activities and fitting these in with school curricula. I am to forward information on education programme for museums to her.

Phil Lee
Collections Section

Sally's Story

During a visit to Kempsey Museum with her sister-in-law earlier this year, Mrs Sally Hickey spoke to one of our volunteers, Margaret Jopling, about her time in Kempsey and Margaret asked Mrs Hickey to send us her story of the first Aboriginal nurse to be trained at Kempsey Hospital. Here is Sally's inspirational story.



Sally at the Beginning of her Nursing Career (photo courtesy Sally Hickey)

“During the late 1950’s, an Englishman named Mr Norton and his family were stationed at Kempsey. He was a member of the Aborigines Welfare Board. Whilst on a visit to Walhallow Mission at Caroon, near Quirindi [NSW], Mr Norton met my father who informed him that he had a daughter who had completed the Intermediate Certificate, and who would like to have a career in nursing. At this time, Aborigines were unable to have a career, but were encouraged to work in rich homes as housemaids. I, myself, was told this by my class teacher, that I would not be accepted in any hospital as a trainee nurse because I was Aboriginal.

However when Mr Norton returned to Kempsey, he had a meeting with Matron Isabel McKay who said that she would be happy to give me ‘a go’! An appointment was made for an interview and my dad and I embarked on a fairly long steam train journey to Kempsey – and back!

After a couple of weeks, I received a letter from Matron McKay to say that I had been accepted as a Cadet Nurse at Macleay District Hospital, as I had only just turned 16 and wouldn’t begin nurse’s training until I was 17. My family was a bit concerned because at that

time Kempsey had a ‘colour bar’ as did other larger towns in NSW. I, however, was excited and a little bit scared.

Dad and I embarked on another long train journey but this time I stayed and would not return home until my rostered holiday the following March. It seemed like ages away as I was the eldest of a family of seven children, 5 girls and 2 boys at that stage, (another brother arrived a little later). I already missed my younger siblings.

However another family was waiting to embrace me – my fellow nurses and their families, who treated me as one of their own and encouraged me every step of the way. So began my 5 years at Macleay District Hospital. We nurses worked hard, studied and at the end of our 4 years training reached our goal and became State Registered Nurses. The registered staff who trained us did a grand job!

After general training I went on to a Midwifery training course at St Margaret’s Hospital Darlinghurst, and in October 1962, qualified as a midwife!

I still keep in touch today with a lot of the friends I made in Kempsey, and have very fond memories of the 5 years I spent there.

Sincerely
Sally Hickey (nee Brennan)”

A Triple Spiritual Encounter of the Third Kind

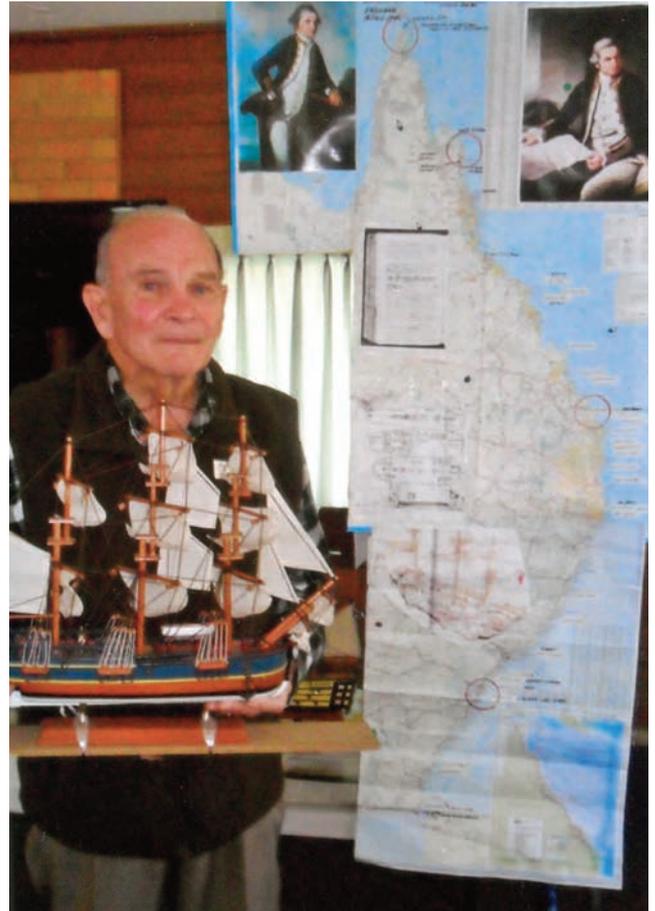
This story unfolds at the kind invitation of my Niece on the Mid North Coast to stop over on a camping and fishing venture at Laurieton. Long before arriving into Laurieton, as I was driving North from the Central Coast, I visualised from my map, if I were to take extra time it would be possible to pay my respects to my late favourite Uncle and Aunty, as prior to their passing were residents of South West Rocks, at the time the ferries run aground. Upon reaching Kempsey, I took time to call on the Museum to endeavour to locate my dear one’s resting place, Peter the attendant took details from me and suggested I have a stroll through the wonderful displays, while he checked out the Genealogy and Historical Research Section. Within 15 minutes, he returned with the exact family details, the most important being the fact they were buried in Arakoon Cemetery, not South West Rocks, as

assumed. I came away with the much needed information, and a feeling of contentment too. Upon leaving the Museum as Peter the Historian was closing at 4:00pm, he handed to me a local map, he had clearly marked the road into the cemetery. His final parting words were to take care driving along the winding road which follows the Macleay River, and by the time I reached Arakoon it would be dark. With the evening fast coming to a close, light rain fell, just enough to necessitate having the windscreen wipers on, the wet road ahead causing me to slow down. I was very grateful to have the map that my friend Peter had given to me at the Museum and the important location of my dear loved ones, Ted and Jessie Burgess. As I turned off the road and into the Arakoon Cemetery entrance, my headlights lit up a lone car in the distance, I parked nearby. As I got out of the car I noticed a woman standing outside of her car, and as I closed my car door, she recognised my presence, by giving me a slight wave, upon which I returned the compliment. As it was near dark by now, I had some difficulty in establishing the alphabetically and numerically marked grave sites, and as I searched the immediate vicinity the lady in a hallowed tone of voice asked me "WHAT NAME ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?"

In the hushed silence, I replied, "BURGESS". Then the lady replied, "DO YOU MEAN TED AND JESSIE BURGESS?" "YES!!! YES!!!" I replied rather emotionally overcome with what I had just heard, upon which this "Heaven Sent Angel" moved toward me, pointing just one metre from where I was standing there a brass engraved memorial of my loved ones mounted on a grey and white granite plinth.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF EDWARD ROY BURGESS 23.10.1913. — 10.6.1982
JESSIE BURGESS 22.12.1917—13.11.2006
IN OUR HEARTS & IN GOD'S CARE

On bended knee I knelt down beside Ted and Jessie's Memorial of our loved ones and whispered a short prayer, thanking God, through several events this evening, making this a treasured moment in my life and the years to come. At that very same instant, a blinding flash of light. Yes, it was my dear friend by way of her mobile camera, had recorded this hallowed event for me. By now darkness had fallen, I stood with my new found friend, Ruth, chatting of the events of the evening, having first established names. Only to find Ruth a close neighbour of my late Grandmother's, both living on the opposite side of the street at Arncliffe on



William "Bill" Lord and Captain Cook Memorabilia (photo courtesy Bill Lord)

the Illawarra line. Ted and Jessie married all those years ago (1940) then when Gran passed away they sold the old home and moved to Oakdale out from Camden, NSW. Ruth's family being such great neighbours, followed them too. Then many years later, they both once again moved to retire at the seaside village of South West Rocks. It seemed that they were loving, and inseparately families. It seemed to be a series of Spiritual Encounters that I witnessed that day.

Firstly stopping off at the Kempsey Historical Museum, for details of the memorial. Secondly on arrival, the by chance contact with Ruth, just before evening fell. Thirdly, that a total stranger, should, without hesitating utter those words "TED AND JESSIE BURGESS." And to have been lovingly neighbours, for it seems a lifetime, just incredible. In closing, to my dear readers, I do hope you find this story exceptional, and inspiring

William A.C. Lord.

BATEAU BAY NSW 31st May, 2013.

P.S. In closing, of all the Uncles and Aunties, Ted and

Jessie were my favourites. Particularly Uncle Ted, who taught me the finer arts of boating and fishing on Botany Bay, in a 16 ft boat that we both watched being built, I was 5 yrs. During WW.2 Ted was empowered by Manpower, and on weekends he would load up the old Morris Cowley with rabbit nets and ferrets along with tent and camping gear, and with me seated along side off we'd head for the surrounding hills of Campbelltown, by then I was 8yrs old. A year or two later his brother Bill bought an acreage of land behind Berrima Gaol, that was another adventure. When at the orchard at Oakdale, we helped with the harvest, he took photos of our wedding,(1958) and assisted us to obtain a Building Loan. What a wonderful couple they were to us over the years.

Bill.

Ship Recognition Models

A recent reorganisation of our display area has enabled us to show our Ship Recognition Models for possibly the first time. This item consists of nine diecast metal and wood scale models of British Navy ships of the Second World War in a wooden case. The models were made by H A Framburg of Chicago, USA, and were used to teach servicemen how to recognise Allied ships to minimise the risk of "friendly fire".

The ships depicted are as follows:

Nelson Class (Battleship) (Brit. BB)

King George V Class (Battleship) (Brit. BB)

Queen Elizabeth Class (Battleship) (Brit. BB)

Ramillies (Revenge Class) aka Royal Sovereign Class (Battleship) (Brit. BB)

River Class (Frigate) (Brit. PG)

"L" Class (Destroyer) (Brit. PD)

Arethusa Class (Light Cruiser) (Brit. CL)

Fiji Class (Light Cruiser) aka Crown Colony Class (Brit. CL)

Southampton Class (Light Cruiser) (Brit. CL)



Naval Ship recognition Model

The models were donated to the Museum in 2001 by Bill Gibbons, who said that it was originally owned by local dentist William Edmonds. Dr Edmonds gave it to children to play with. Research found that the item was half of a kit consisting of two cases, hinged in the middle and folding together and would originally have consisted of around eighteen models. The kits were produced in two sizes, one comprising 1/1200 scale models for students, and the other with 1/500 scale models for a teacher. Our partial kit is the rarer 1/500 scale model.

The kit was in poor condition with water and rodent damage. The water damage could have been caused by the 1949 flood which caused severe damage to Dr Edmond's home and rooms in Holman Street. Limited restoration was carried out with painting restricted to areas bare of paint, and damaged shelves replaced with new plywood.

Nothing could be found on the use of these kits in Australia. During World War 2, the RAAF ran the Central School of Ship and Aircraft recognition but they used plastic models, which were originally sculpted in wood then sent to Melbourne for casting. Only one other kit is to be found in a museum collection in Australia, and that is in the Melbourne Museum (Museum Victoria).

So how did this kit, rare in Australia, find its way to the Macleay Valley? It could have been purchased at an army surplus auction after the War. During World War 2, toy production was curtailed as raw materials were commandeered for the war effort. Toys became scarce and models such as those in the naval recognition kit were keenly sought after at disposal auctions for children's toys.

Another possibility is that the kit may have been brought to Kempsey by one of twenty-eight servicemen from the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm, who first visited the Macleay Valley in July 1945. As the war in Europe was drawing towards a close, the Royal Navy established a base of its Fleet Air Arm in Australia to assist in the fight against the Japanese. Fleet Air Arm personnel were entertained in Kempsey at a ball and had excursions during their stay here. LAF A Smith from Manchester was boarded with Bill Edmonds during their visit, and may have presented the kit to him on a return visit after the war ended.

Please contact the Museum if you can add anything to the history of this exhibit.

Trial Bay Ocean Swim



Photo courtesy John Mitchell, Urunga NSW

John from Urunga sent us a photograph of the above pin asking for more information. The pin would have been issued as a fundraiser for the Trial Bay Ocean Swim held on Boxing Day, 26 December 1960. The event was organised by the Kempsey and District National Fitness Committee and was based on a similar event held at Townsville, where competitors swam from Magnetic Island to the mainland. It was possibly the first event of this type held in New South Wales. The race was from the South West Rocks to Trial Bay and then back again, a distance of four miles (6.5 kilometres). A donation of £200 from the Shell Oil Company assisted with the construction of six shark-proof cages for the competitors to swim in. The cages were sixteen feet (488 cms) long, eight feet (244 cms) wide and six feet (183 cms) deep. The pipe frames were covered in heavy gauge wire netting with each cage held afloat by twelve four-gallon (18 litre) drums. Launches towed the cages and each cage had a pontoon attached to allow a trainer or instructor to accompany the swimmer. Applications to compete were invited from swimmers in the area from Coffs Harbour to Taree and the winner would be determined by the fastest time. It was hoped by the Committee to raise enough funds for a gymnasium at Kempsey High School.

A crowd of around 10,000 people attended the Ocean Swim event at South West Rocks on Boxing Day, whilst thousands of viewers watched coverage of the event on television in Sydney and Brisbane that night. The six competitors were Col Saunders (South West Rocks), Ken Clegg (Kempsey), Ken Cook (Kempsey), Reg Olive (Coffs Harbour), Tom Cook (Macksville) and Garry Gillies (South West Rocks). The race was won by Garry Gillies in a time of 54 minutes and 15

seconds, who outclassed his competitors in every way. Garry Gillies still competes in surfing and swimming events around the Macleay.

Financially the event was not a success. The Committee were disappointed at the amount of money raised and doubted if there would be a profit at all. It intended to stage the event the following year with some changes, however it appears this was the one and only Ocean Swim on the Macleay.

The Kempsey and District National Fitness Committee had been formed in 1958 when the Kempsey Rotary Club asked the Mayor to call a public meeting to discuss such a Committee. Rotary then invited Mr Gordon Young, Director of Physical Education and Executive Member of the National Fitness Council of NSW, to attend and address the meeting.

References: Macleay District Advertiser November 1960 and January 1961
MRHS files

Publications Report

Here is a round-up of our publications activity for the past few months.

Our prolific author, Garry Munday, has been busy with a couple of books and even found time to write our May Journal, Sport on the Macleay in 1901. Garry's book *Travelling Stock Routes: Kempsey to Armidale* is a detailed study of this historic route from the New England Tablelands to the coast and is enlivened with stories of farmers, drovers and teamsters. The book is the third to be issued in our Macleay Heritage Series.

Garry's book on Kempsey horseracing is currently in the design stage and is expected to be published in November. It details horseracing on the Macleay from its beginnings to 1936, the Macleay Valley Centenary year. The book traces the early history of the two principal clubs in the valley, the Macleay River Jockey Club and the Gladstone and Lower Macleay Jockey Club as well as other minor clubs. As well it includes stories of various jockeys, trainers and owners and tales of the horses themselves.

Also in the process of being published is Garry's monograph, *Defunct Schools of the Macleay Valley*. This will trace many of the schools such as Spankers Flat and Nullenbullah which have long since disappeared. The monograph will provide a resource

for those wishing to research particular schools with cross references to the digitised Argus and Chronicle files, to the photos in the museum's collection and to personal files kept at the museum. This will be available in printed form and later on CD-ROM.

My own book *Letters from South Africa: The Macleay River and the South African Boer War (1899-1902)* is also completed and is due to be printed by the end of September. It will be published with the assistance of a grant from the Department of Veteran's Affairs under the Saluting Their Service programme. It includes biographies of fifty-three servicemen associated with this often forgotten war. Also there are around fifty letters mostly from servicemen in South Africa and never before published in book form. These are unabridged accounts, often graphically detailing the hardships the men and their comrades experienced. The book also contains a suggested nominal roll of these men and has local RSL Sub-Branch endorsement. I interviewed around twenty descendants who generously shared photographs and information for my book. I was also able to draw on the extensive resources of our Society for publication, research material and photographs.

Phil Lee and Garry Munday

Our Affiliations

Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations
Australasian Telephone Collector's Society Inc
Australian National Maritime Museum
Historic Houses Trust
Macleay Valley Coast Tourism
Museums Australia
Museums and Galleries NSW
Royal Australian Historical Society

Benefits of Membership

Membership Applications and Renewals start from February in the New Year. Members of the Macleay River Historical Society now enjoy the following benefits:
Quarterly Journal (posted or pick up from Museum)
Quarterly Newsletter (posted, emailed or pick up from Museum)
Discounts on photos and research



Macleay River Historical Society

Office Bearers:

President

Phil Lee

Vice President

Garry Munday

Secretary & Public Officer

Ruth Woodward

Treasurer

Barbara Coughran

Patrons

Billie Crawford

Terry Eakin

Geraldine Yabsley

John Bowell

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Email: mrhs5@bigpond.com

Website: www.kempseymuseum.org

Membership

\$18.00 single

\$23.00 plus journal and postage

Committee Meetings

Meetings are held at 3pm
every third Tuesday of the month

Research

Monday: Ruth Woodward

Tuesday: Peggy Gould

Thursday: Garry Munday

Photographic

Friday: Judy Waters, Debbie Reynolds, Phil Lee

MUSEUM OPEN

10.00 am to 4.00 pm daily except
Good Friday and Christmas day